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(54) **CHILD CARRIERS AND METHODS FOR OPERATING THE SAME**

(75) Inventors: **Ryan Calilung**, Chicago, IL (US); **Peter J. Myers**, Wheaton, IL (US); **Trisha Kramer**, Montgomery, IL (US); **Chris Ryan**, Chicago, IL (US)

(73) Assignee: **Kolcraft Enterprises, Inc.**, Chicago, IL (US)

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*Primary Examiner* — Adam Waggenspack

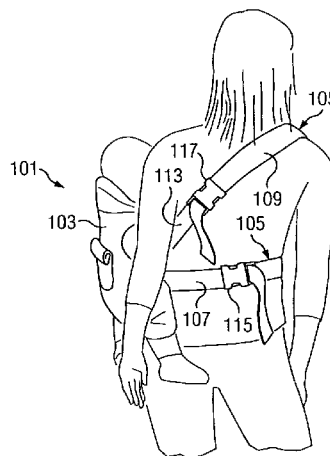
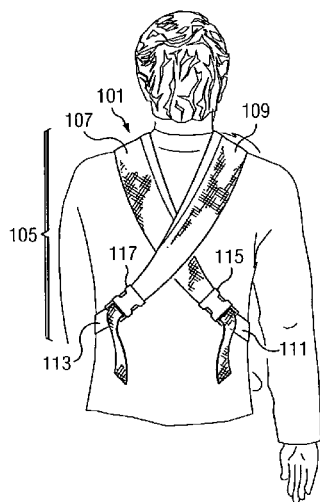
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Hanley, Flight and Zimmerman, LLC

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#### ABSTRACT

Child carriers and methods for operating the same are disclosed. An example child carrier includes a child support pouch to receive a child in a substantially upright position and a harness to support the child support pouch on an adult. The harness includes first and second support straps, first and second waist straps, and first and second support strap connector pairs. The first support strap connector pair is located to releasably connect the first support strap to the first waist strap in a first orientation with the first support strap across a shoulder of the adult and to releasably connect the first support strap to the first waist strap in a second orientation with the first support strap around a waist of the adult. The second support strap connector pair is located to releasably connect the second support strap to the second waist strap.

**31 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets**



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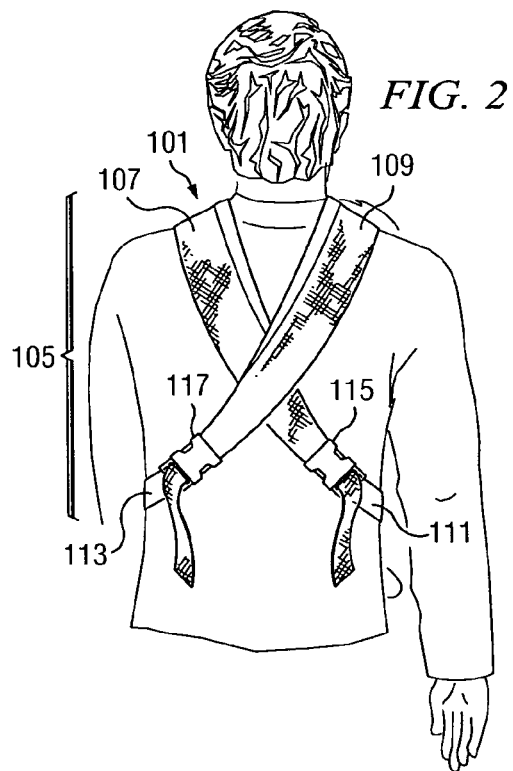
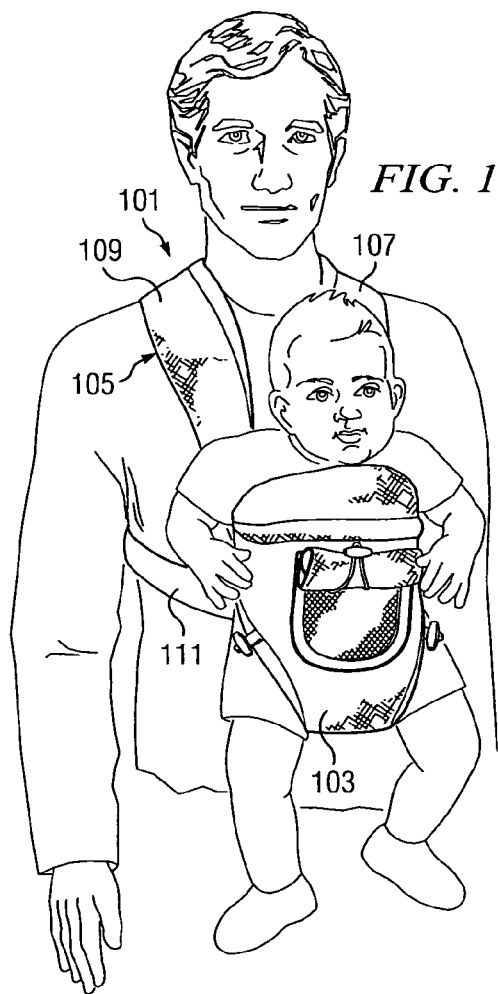
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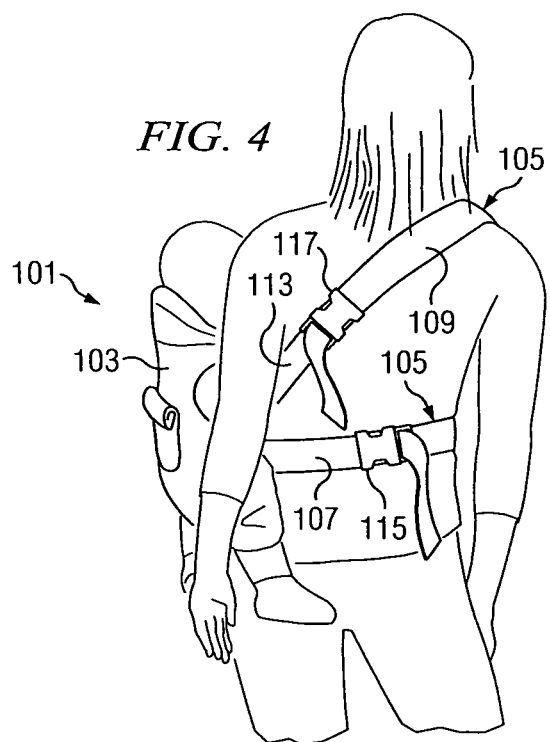
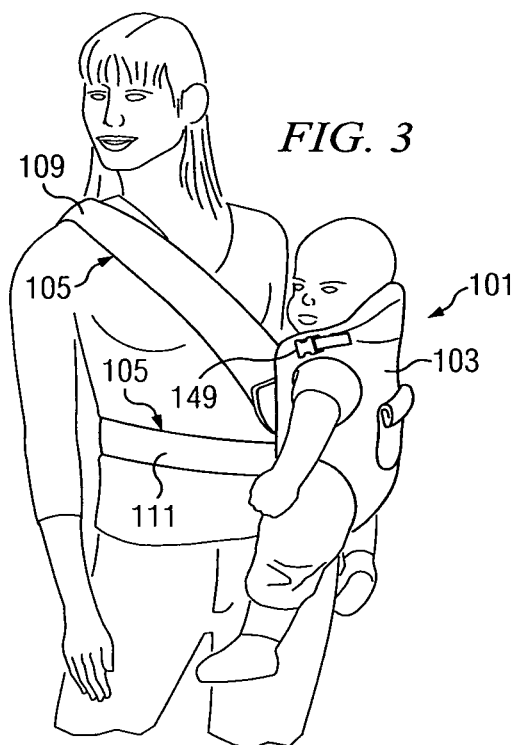
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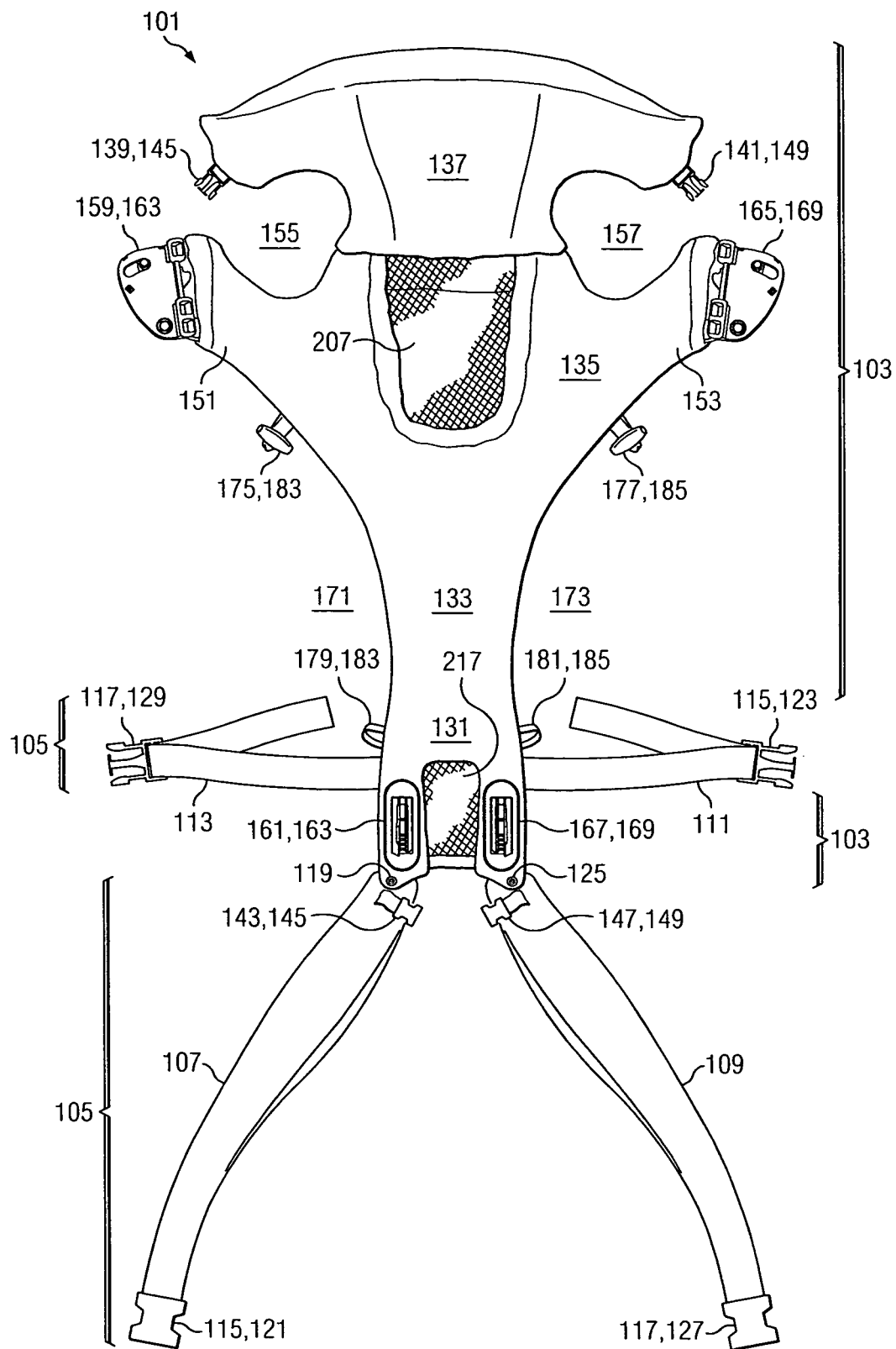
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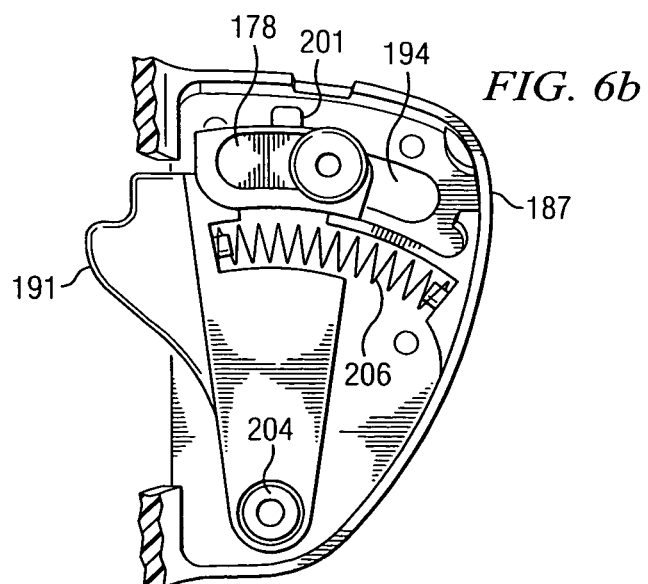
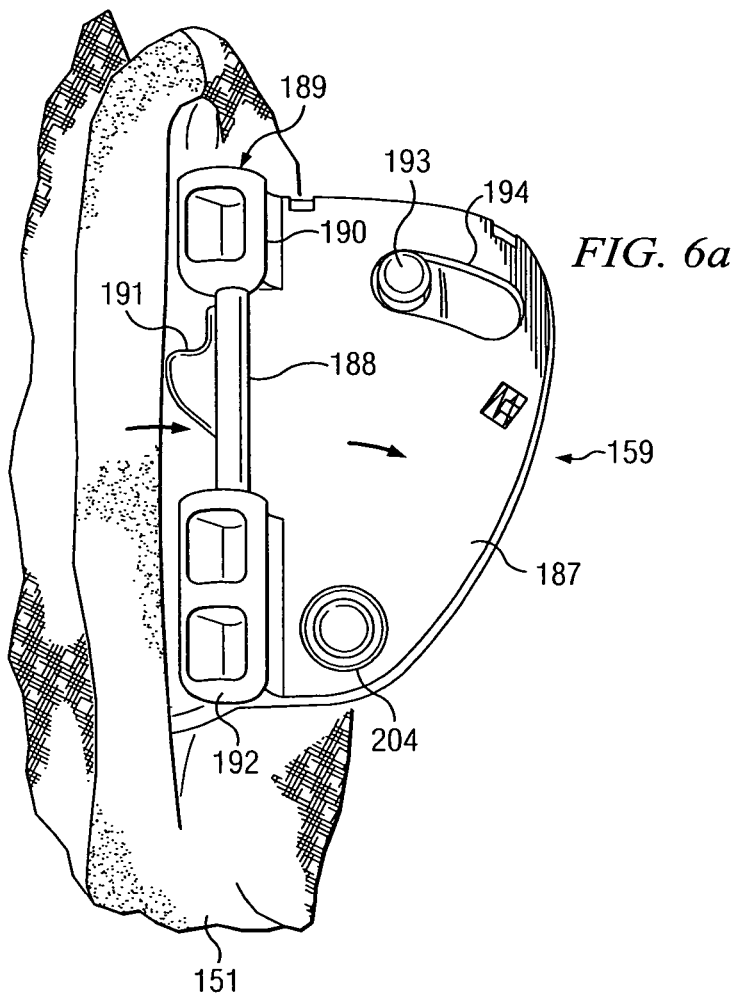
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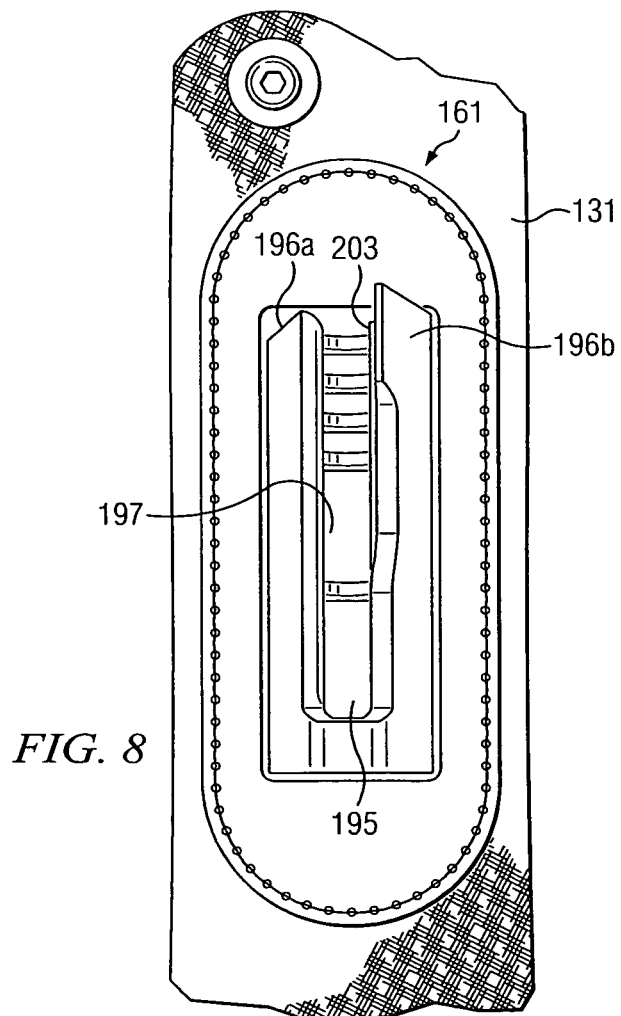
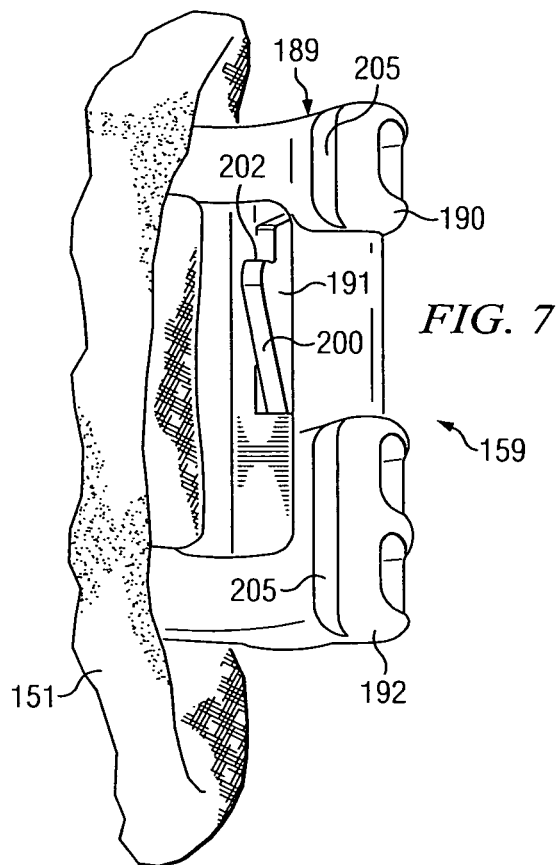


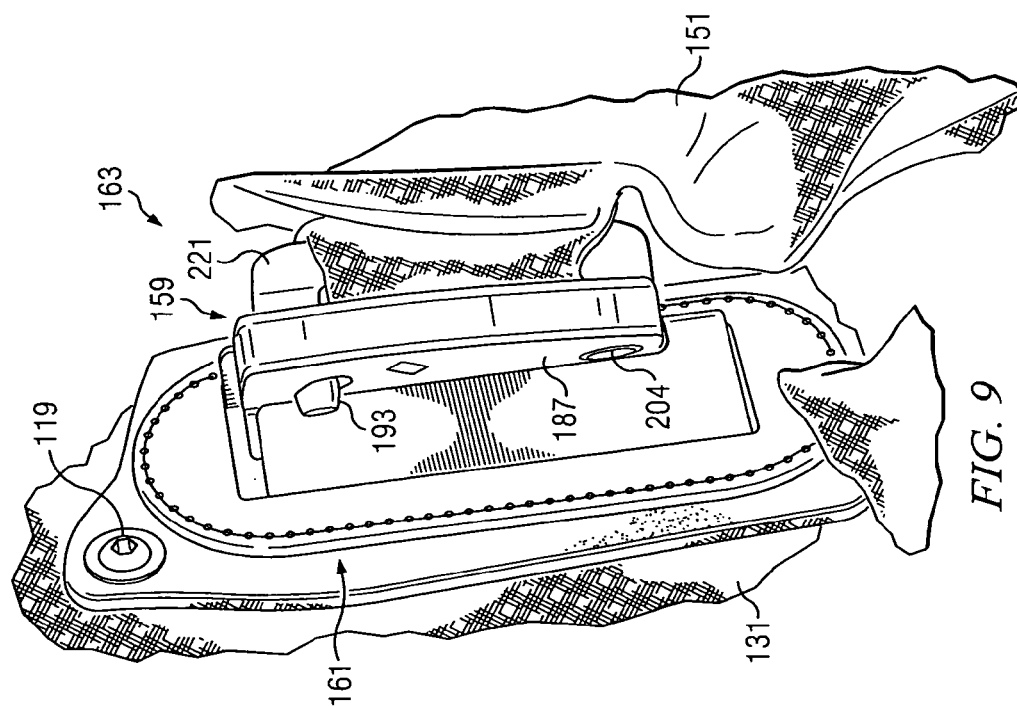
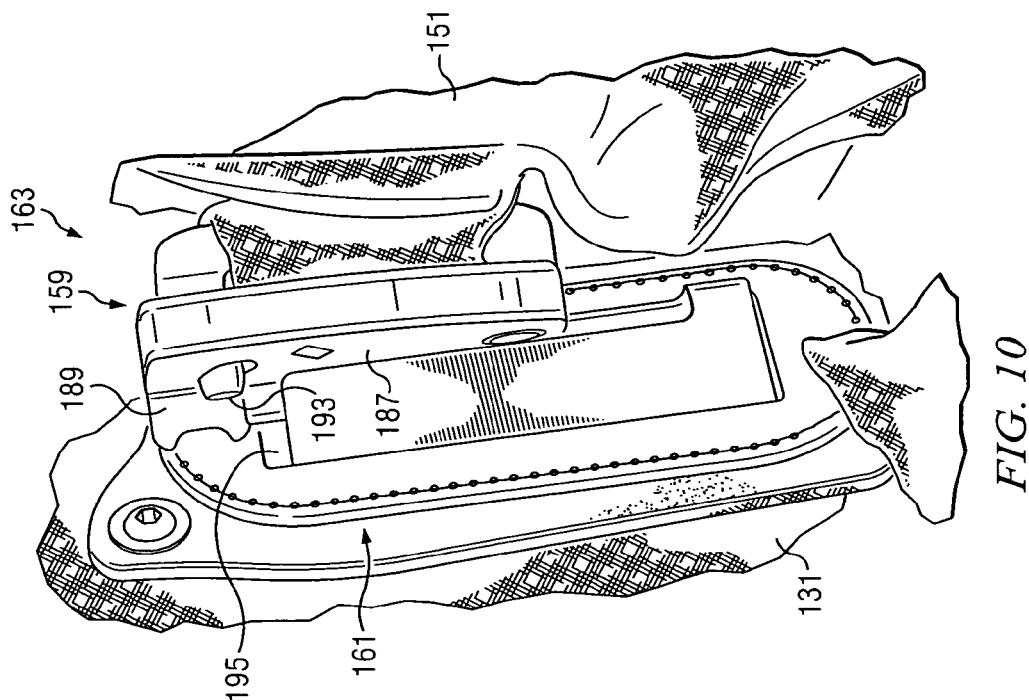




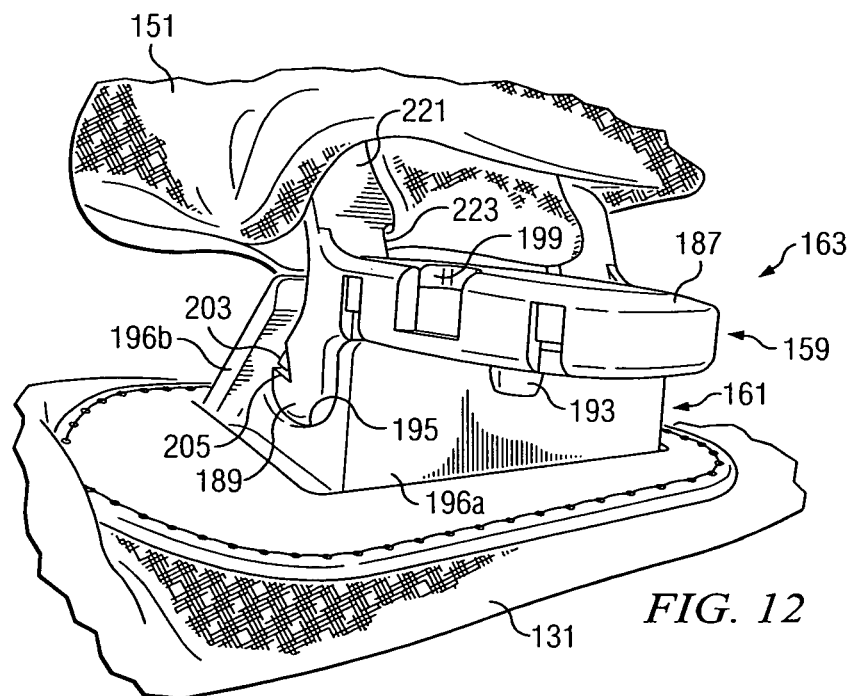
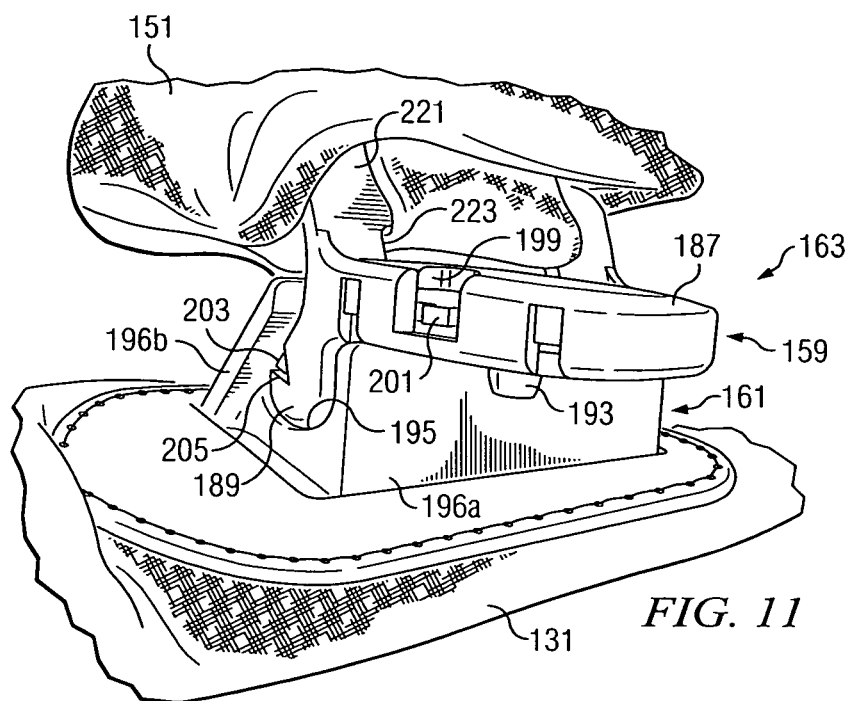
*FIG. 5*

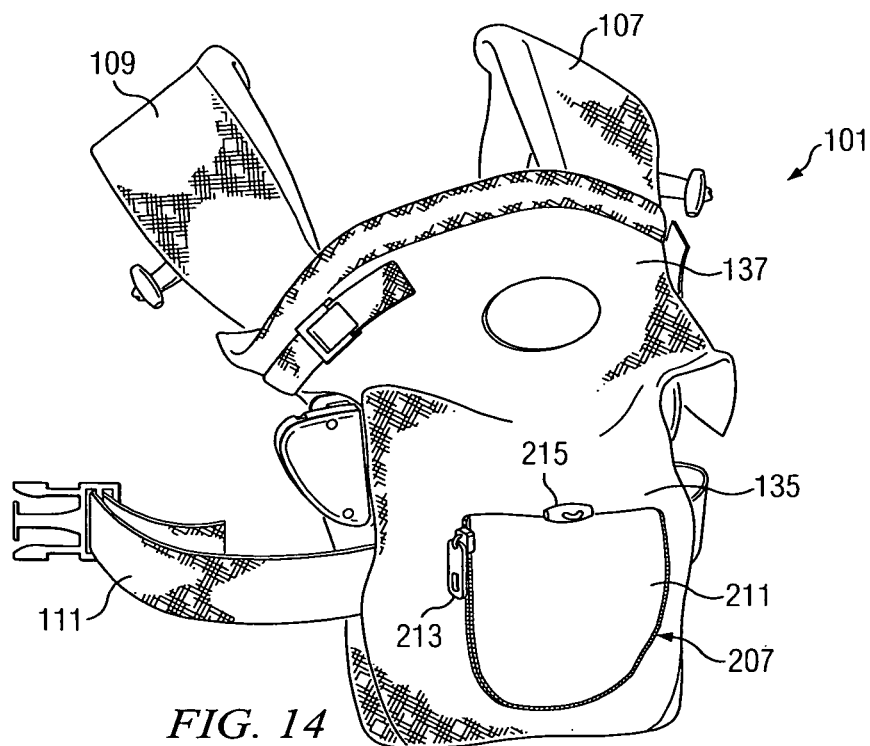
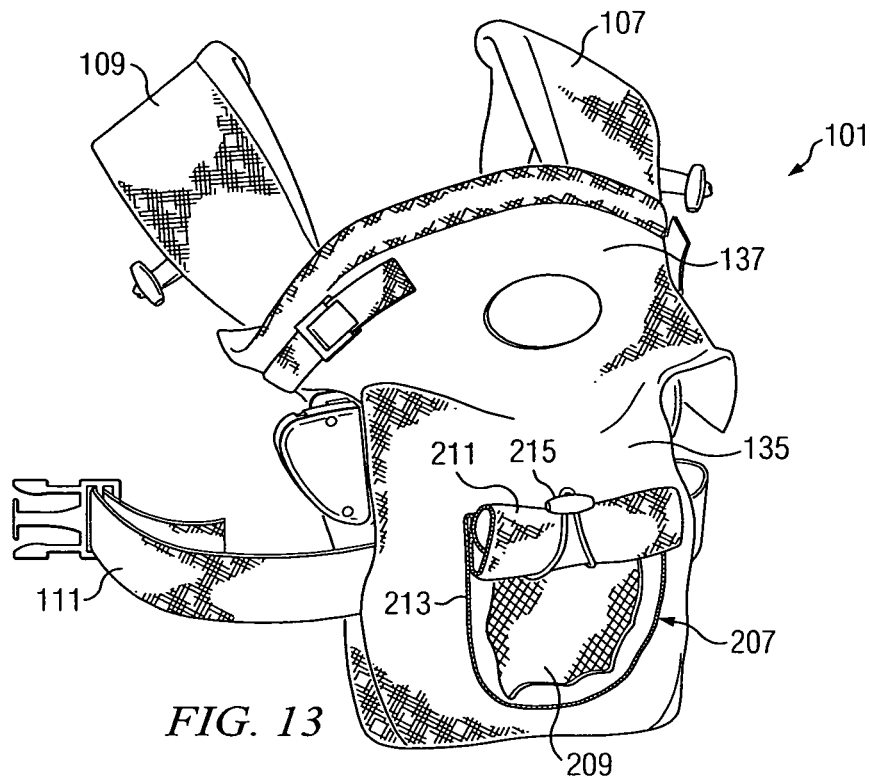












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## CHILD CARRIERS AND METHODS FOR OPERATING THE SAME

### FIELD OF THE DISCLOSURE

This disclosure relates generally to child carrying devices, and, more particularly, to child carrying devices that are worn on an adult and methods of operating the same.

### BACKGROUND

Conventional child carriers are used by adults to carry infants and young children. Child carriers are structured so that the child is fastened securely in the carrier, which in turn is fastened securely to the wearer, thus freeing the arms and hands of the wearer from the burdens of directly providing support to the child and not having free hands. The use of a child carrier allows parents or other adults to carry a child close to them, to be free from having to push around a stroller or awkwardly carry a car seat at their side, and to have their hands free to carry other objects or perform other functions.

Known child carriers include back child carriers and front child carriers. Back child carriers carry the child in a child-support pouch on the back of an adult. Front child carriers carry the child in a child-support pouch on the front of the adult. Some child-support pouches allow the child to be carried facing forward (i.e., in the same direction as the adult when the carrier is worn on the chest of the adult), and some child-support pouches allow the child to be carried facing rearward (i.e., facing towards the adult when the carrier is worn on the chest of the adult).

Typical front child carriers have a shoulder harness that has left and right shoulder straps which go over, respectively, the left and right shoulders of the adult who is carrying the child. Some child carriers have an additional strap in the form of a waist belt. The shoulder straps have ends which are attached to the child support pouch. It is also common for the left shoulder strap to extend from the upper left side to the lower right side of the pouch and the right shoulder strap to extend from the upper right side to the lower left side of the pouch where the one strap crosses over the other strap at the back of the adult wearing the front child carrier. The shoulder straps may be adjusted by changing a snap-attachment location of the shoulder straps to the pouch or by changing the working length of the shoulder straps using a buckle structure.

In many typical designs, as the wearer assembles the child carrier, the child is placed in the carrier and then the child support pouch is attached to the shoulder straps via a typical male/female connection wherein a "male" piece is inserted into a "female" piece. However, other connections such as, for example, ties and snaps may be used as well. Many times, the wearer or other person assembling the child carrier may be rushed, overwhelmed with other children, luggage or background noise and commotion, and unable to either hear the male and female connectors click into place or otherwise fail to determine that the male and female connectors are not fully mated, which can be very dangerous. Because child carriers are used to carry children, including fragile infants, it is extremely important that the connectors coupling the child support pouch to shoulder straps, e.g., the male/female connections are secure. If a connection were to become loose, the child support pouch could disassociate from the shoulder straps and open up, which could result in the child being carried therein to fall from the pouch and become injured.

In many typical designs, the child support pouch includes a front, bottom and back. The front of the support pouch is the portion that faces outwards when the wearer is wearing the

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child carrier on his or her chest. Thus, the front portion may cover the back or chest of the child placed therein, depending upon the orientation of the child. The bottom portion covers and supports the bottom of the child and, consequently, the majority of the weight of the child. The back portion of the child support pouch is positioned between the adult wearer and the carried child, and covers the back or chest of the child, again depending on the orientation of the child situated therein. Often the child support pouches are sized large enough to also cover a substantial portion of the head and/or arms of the child carried therein. Because so much of the child is engulfed in the child support pouch, the temperature in the interior of the pouch may be substantially higher than the temperature exterior to the pouch. Further, moisture may develop within the child support pouch due to the increased temperature and/or from a leaky diaper. Both the increased temperature and the moisture may create an unpleasant environment in the child support pouch.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is front view of an example child carrier shown worn over both shoulders of a wearer.

FIG. 2 is a rear view of the carrier as shown in FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a front view of the carrier of FIG. 1 shown worn over one shoulder and around the waist of a wearer.

FIG. 4 is a rear view of the carrier as shown in FIG. 3.

FIG. 5 is a plan view of the carrier of FIG. 1 shown fully expanded in an unworn state.

FIG. 6a is an enlarged bottom view of an example male child support connector.

FIG. 6b is an exposed view showing the interior of the example male child support connector of FIG. 6a.

FIG. 7 is a side view of the child support connector of FIG. 6a.

FIG. 8 is an enlarged plan view of an example female child support connector.

FIG. 9 is a side view of the male connector of FIG. 6a secured in the female connector of FIG. 8.

FIG. 10 is a side view of the male connector of FIG. 6a entering or exiting the female connector of FIG. 8.

FIG. 11 is a perspective view of the example male connector and the example female connector of FIGS. 6a-10 in a locked state.

FIG. 12 is a view similar to FIG. 11, but showing the male connector and female connector in an unlocked state.

FIG. 13 is a perspective view of an example carrier with an example vent in an example open state.

FIG. 14 is a perspective view of an example carrier with an example vent in an example closed state.

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

FIGS. 1-5 illustrate an example child carrier 101 constructed in accordance with the teachings of invention. The child carrier 101 of the illustrated example includes a child support pouch 103 to receive a child in a substantially upright position and a harness 105 to support the child support pouch 103 on an adult. In the illustrated example, the harness 105 includes first and second support straps 107, 109, first and second waist straps 111, 113, and first and second support strap connector pairs 115, 117. The first support strap connector pair 115 may be located to releasably connect the first support strap 107 to the first waist strap 111 in a first orientation with the first support strap 107 across a shoulder of the adult such that the child support pouch 103 is located on the chest of the adult wearing the harness 105 (FIGS. 1 and 2).

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The first support strap connector pair **115** may also be located to releasably connect the first support strap **107** to the first waist strap **111** in a second orientation with the first support strap **107** around a waist of the adult such that the child support pouch **103** is located on a hip of the adult wearing the harness **105** (FIGS. 3 and 4). Similarly, the second support strap connector pair **117** is located to releasably connect the second support strap **109** to the second waist strap **113**. The second support strap **109** and the second waist strap **113** may be connected in a first orientation with the second support strap **109** across a shoulder of the adult such that the child support pouch **103** is located on the chest of the adult wearing the harness **105** or in a second orientation with the second support strap **109** across the waist of the adult such that the child support pouch is located on a hip of the adult wearing the harness **105**.

Preferably at least one of the support straps **107**, **109** is located across a shoulder of the adult at all times. In other words, the first support strap **107** and the second support strap **109** should not both be in the second orientation. Any other orientation combination (e.g., first support strap **107** in the first orientation and second support strap **109** also in the first orientation, first support strap **107** in the first orientation while the second support strap **109** is in the second orientation, or first support strap **107** in the second orientation while the second support strap is in the first orientation) are permissible to enable the child support pouch **103** to be located in the right hip, left hip or chest of the adult wearer.

One or more of the straps **107**, **109**, **111**, **113** is preferably adjustable to adjust to the comfort or size of the wearer. For example, as shown in FIG. 5, the first waist strap **111** is threaded through a first male harness connector **123**. The first male harness connector **123** may be moved to any location along the first waist strap **111**. The closer the first male harness connector is located to the child support pouch **103**, the shorter the working length of the first waist strap **111** becomes, i.e., the tighter the first waist strap **111** will fit the adult wearer. Similarly, the second waist strap **113** is threaded through a second male harness connector **129**. The second male harness connector **129** may be moved along the second waist strap **113** in a similar manner as the first male connector **123** is adjusted along the first waist strap **111**, with similar results. Furthermore, the shoulder straps **107**, **109** are adjustable in a similar fashion by movement of a first female harness connector **121** and a second female harness connector **127** to shorten or lengthen the first shoulder support strap **107** and second shoulder support strap **109**, respectively. Though the illustrated example shows male harness connectors **123**, **129** on the waist straps **111**, **113** and female harness connectors **121**, **129** on the shoulder straps **107**, **109**, any combination of harness connectors **121**, **123**, **127**, **129** and straps **107**, **109**, **111**, **113** described herein may be used. Furthermore, though the straps **107**, **109**, **111**, **113** are adjustable through movements of the harness connectors **121**, **123**, **127** and **129**, the straps **107**, **109**, **111**, **113** may be adjusted by any other mechanical means such as, for example, snaps, clips or ties.

In the illustrated example, the first support strap **107** is connected at one end to the child support pouch **103** via a first pivot **119** (FIG. 5). The pivot may be implemented, for example, by a rivet or other mechanical fastener. The opposite end of the first support strap **107** of the illustrated example is connected to the first female harness connector **121**. The first waist strap **111** of the illustrated example is connected at one end to the child support pouch **103** and is coupled to the first male harness connector **123** either at the other end or along the length of the first waist strap **111**. The female and male connectors **121**, **123** mate to form the first support strap

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connector pair **115**. Similarly, the second support strap **109** of the illustrated example is connected at one end to the child support pouch **103** via a second pivot **125**. The pivot may be implemented, for example, by a rivet or other mechanical fastener. The opposite end of the second support strap **109** of the illustrated example is connected to the second female harness connector **127**. The second waist strap **113** of the illustrated example is connected at one end to the child support pouch **103** and is coupled to the second female harness connector **129** either at the other end of along the length of the second waist strap **113**. The female and male connectors **127**, **129** mate to form the second support strap connector pair **117**. If convertibility is not desired (i.e., if it is desired to limit the carrier **101** to use as a front carrier), the first and second support straps **107**, **109** and/or the first and second waist straps **111**, **113** may be threaded through or otherwise coupled to a four-way buckle (not shown), which would, for example, be located near the center of the back of the user to hold the straps **107**, **109**, **111**, **113** in a substantially immobile relation to one another.

Though the first female harness connector **121** is coupled to the first support strap **107**, and the first male harness connector **123** is coupled to the first waist strap **111**, the connectors **121**, **123** may be switched and the first female harness connector **121** may be coupled to the first waist strap **111** and the first male harness connector **123** may be coupled to the first support strap **107**. Similarly, though the second female harness connector **127** is coupled to the second support strap **109**, and the second male harness connector **129** is coupled to the second waist strap **113**, the connectors **127**, **129** may be switched and the second female harness connector **127** may be coupled to the second waist strap **113** and the second male harness connector **129** may be coupled to the first support strap **109**. Reversing the locations of the first female harness connector **121** and the first male harness connector **123** without changing the location of the second female harness connector **127** and second male harness connector **129** or reversing the second female harness connector **127** and second male harness connector **129** without changing the location of the first female harness connector **121** and the first male harness connector **123** (i.e., the first and second female harness connectors **121**, **127** are not both coupled to the first and second support straps **107**, **109**) provides a configuration where the first support strap **107** will connect with the first waist strap **111** but cannot be mistakenly connected to the second waist strap **113**, and where the second support strap **109** will connect with the second waist strap **113** but cannot be mistakenly connected to the first waist strap **111**. Proper assembly of the child carrier **101** is, thus, ensured.

The example child support pouch **103** of the illustrated example includes a back portion **131**, a bottom portion **133** and a front portion **135**. In the example of FIG. 105, the back portion **131** is located to be positioned between a child that is in the child support pouch **103** and the wearer of the harness **105**.

The bottom portion **133** of the illustrated example supports the child from below. In the example of FIGS. 1-5, the bottom portion **133** has a plurality of mechanical fasteners (not shown) such as a zipper with a plurality of generally parallel zipper teeth runs such that the zipper can be closed using different pairs of the runs to bunch or fold the bottom **133** to effectively shorten or lengthen the same. However, any type of mechanical fastener can be used to adjust the length of the bottom portion **133**. Shortening the length of the bottom portion **133** decreases the volume of the child support pouch **103**, which can be done to more securely fit a smaller child. Likewise, increasing the length of the bottom portion **133**

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increases the volume of the child support pouch **103**, which can be done to accommodate the size of an older or larger child.

In the illustrated example, the front portion **135** of the pouch **103** faces outwards, away from the body of the adult wearer. In the illustrated example, a headrest **137** is coupled to the front portion **135** of the pouch **103**. FIGS. **3** and **4** show the headrest **137** in a use or support position. As shown in FIG. **5**, the headrest **137** is attached to a first male headrest connector **139** and a second male headrest connector **141**. The first male headrest connector **139** may be coupled to a first female headrest connector **143**, which may be located on the first support strap **107** or the back portion **131** of the child support pouch **103** to form a first headrest connector pair **145**. Likewise, the second male headrest connector **141** may be coupled to a second female headrest connector **147**, which may be located on the second support strap **109** or the back portion **131** of the child support pouch **103** to form a second headrest connector pair **149**. The first and second headrest connector pairs **145**, **149** may be used to couple the headrest **137** to the harness **105**, the back portion **131** of the child support pouch **103**, the first support strap **107** and/or the second support strap **109**. Though the illustrated example shows the first and second male headrest connectors **139**, **141** coupled to the headrest **137** and the first and second female headrest connectors **143**, **147** coupled to first and second support straps **107**, **109**, respectively, either or both of the first and second female headrest connectors **143**, **147** may be coupled to the headrest **137** and either or both of the first and second male headrest connectors **139**, **141** may be respectively coupled to the first and second support straps **107**, **109** or to the back portion **131**.

Furthermore, when the first and second headrest connection pairs **145**, **149** are engaged, the headrest **137** is in a support position such that the headrest **137** will support the head of the child carried in the child carrier **101** (See FIG. **3**). FIG. **1** shows the headrest **137** after it has been moved out of the support position and folded down into a storage position. In this storage position, the headrest connector pairs **145**, **149** may be disengaged or engaged in positions **180°** from the position noted above.

Returning to FIG. **5**, in the illustrated example, the front portion **135** of the child support pouch **103** has a first wing **151** and a second wing **153**. When the first headrest connector pair **145** is engaged, the first wing **151** cooperates with the headrest **137** to form a first arm opening **155**. Similarly, when the second headrest connector pair **149** is engaged, the second wing **153** cooperates with the headrest **137** to form a second arm opening **157**. The arm openings **155**, **157** enable the passage of the arms of the child support pouch **103**, which may increase the child's comfort (See FIG. **3**).

In the illustrated example, the first wing **151** is coupled to a first child support connector **159** that mates with a second child support connector **161**, which is located on the back portion **131**, to form a first fastener or child support strap connector pair **163**. Similarly, in the example of FIGS. **1-5**, the second wing **153** is coupled to a third child support connector **165** that mates with a fourth child support connector **167**, which is located on the back portion **131** to form a second fastener or child support strap connector pair **169**. When the first child support connector **159** is coupled to the second child support connector **161** to form the fastener **163** and the third child support connector **165** is coupled to the fourth child support connector **167** to form the fastener **169**, the front portion **135** substantially opposes the back portion **131** to form the child support pouch **103**. In the illustrated example, the first, second, third, and fourth child support connectors

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**159**, **161**, **165**, **167** are coupled to the child support pouch **103** via any known mechanical or chemical fastener, e.g., (thread, glue, rivets, etc.).

When the fasteners **163**, **169** are formed, the front portion **135**, the bottom portion **133** and the back portion **131** cooperate to form a first leg opening **171** and a second leg opening **173**. Similar to the arm openings **155**, **157**, the leg openings **171**, **173** enable the passage of the legs of the child to the exterior of the child support pouch **103**, which increases the child's comfort and prevents the child from using his or her legs to stand within the pouch **103** (FIGS. **1** and **3**). The front portion **135** of the illustrated example pouch **103** includes a first toggle **175** and a second toggle **177**. The back portion **131** of the example pouch **103** includes a first loop **179** and a second loop **181**. The first toggle **175** and first loop **179** form a first leg opening connector **183**, and the second toggle **177** and second loop **181** form a second leg opening connector **185**. When the leg opening connectors **183**, **185** are engaged, the leg openings **171**, **173** are reduced in size. Reducing or enlarging the size of the leg openings **171**, **173** ensures a secure fit for a variety of differently-sized children. Though in the illustrated example toggles **177**, **179** and loops **179**, **181** are shown, the leg opening connectors **183**, **185** may be formed from any type of mechanical fastener, e.g., Velcro® strips, snaps, buttons, pins, etc. Furthermore, one or both of the loops **179**, **181** may be coupled to the first support strap **107** and/or the second support strap **109** instead of the back portion **131**. Further, the respective positions of one or both pairs of the toggles **177**, **179** and loops **179**, **181** may be reversed.

As shown in FIGS. **1-4**, the child carrier **101** may be worn such that the child support pouch **103** is located adjacent the chest of an adult wearer when the first support strap **107** and the second support strap **109** are positioned in a first orientation over the left and right shoulders of the wearer (FIGS. **1** and **2**). Additionally, the child carrier **101** may be worn such that the child support pouch **103** is located adjacent to either side of an adult wearer when the first supporting strap **107** is positioned in a second orientation over one of the wearer's shoulders and across the wearer's chest, and the second support strap **109** is positioned in a second orientation around the wearer's waist (FIGS. **3** and **4**) or vice versa. The conversion from the first orientation of FIGS. **1** and **2** (i.e., the front carry position) to the second orientation of FIGS. **3** and **4** (i.e., the hip carry position) may occur by disengaging one, both or neither of the first and second support strap connector pairs **115**, **117**. Further the conversion may occur while the child carrier **101** is being worn, it is recommended that a child not be disposed in the child support pouch **103** during the conversion.

To effect the conversion, the wearer of the child carrier **101** or other person detaches the first support strap **107** from the first waist strap **111**, and thus disassembles the first support strap connector pair **115**. Then the child support pouch **103** is moved from the front position to the hip position, and the first support strap **107** is moved from over the wearer's shoulder to around the wearer's waist. The first support strap **107** is moved about the first pivot **119** to effect this movement. Once the first support strap **107** is repositioned, the first support strap **107** is recoupled to the first waist strap **111**. Further, the first support strap **107** and first waist strap **111** may be adjusted as needed. This conversion may also occur using the second support strap connector pair **117** and second pivot **125** but will result in the pouch **103** being positioned on the opposite hip than when the first strap connector pair **115** is

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converted. Further, to convert from either one of the hip positions to the front position, the opposite process is followed.

An enlarged view of the example first child support connector **159** is shown in FIGS. **6a**, **b** and **7**. The example first child support connector **159** is a male connector that includes a grip **187** and a lug **189** extending from the grip **187**. The illustrated grip **187** is a flat, quasi-semi-circular shape that can be easily gripped by the wearer or other person. Any other shape that may be easily grasped and manipulated may alternatively be used. The lug **189** mates with an example second child support connector **161**, as described in greater detail below. The illustrated lug **189** has enlarged ends **190**, **192** to guide the first child support connector **159** to mate with the second child support connector **161** and a reduced middle section **188** between the ends **190**, **192** to reduce the weight of the first child support connector **159**. However, the lug **189** may be any shape to engage the second child support connector **161**.

The grip **187** of the illustrated example serves as a housing to house a portion of a latch **191**. The latch **191** is pivotable about a point **204** (FIG. **6a**, **b**) between an over-locked position (FIGS. **6a**, **b** and **7**) and an unlocked or release position (not shown) with a locked or latched position intermediate the over-locked and released positions. In the illustrated example, the grip **187** also houses a spring **206** (FIG. **6b**) that is seated between an inner surface of the grip **187** and a surface of the latch **191**. The spring **206** biases the latch **191** toward the over-locked position. Further, a handle **193** extends through a window **194** defined in the grip **187** and through a slot **178** defined in the latch **191**. The handle **193** is operatively coupled to the latch **191** to facilitate actuation of the latch **191** between the over-locked position and the unlocked position, as described in greater detail below. The handle **193** is preferably positioned where it can be easily actuated with the thumb of a hand holding the grip **187**.

FIG. **8** shows an example second child support connector **161** in greater detail. In the example of FIG. **8**, the second child support connector **161** is a female connector that includes a guide channel **195**, which is configured to receive the lug **189** of the first child support connector **159**. The guide channel **195** is defined by opposed walls **196a**, **b** of the second child support connector **161**. The second child support connector **161** also includes a receptacle **197** that may be an indentation formed in one of the walls **196b** of the second child support connector **161**. The receptacle **197** is positioned to mate with the latch **191** when the lug **189** is fully inserted in the channel **195** and the latch **191** is in the locked position to secure the first and second child support connectors **159**, **161** in releasable engagement. A surface adjacent the receptacle **197** engages a surface of the latch **191** to hold the latch in the locked position between the over-locked position and the released position. In an alternative example, the latch **191** may be coupled to the second child support connector **161** and first child support connector **159** may include the receptacle **197**. In the illustrated example of FIGS. **1-5**, the third child support connector **165** is substantially the same as the first child support connector **159**, and the fourth child support connector **167** is substantially the same as the second child support connector **161**.

FIGS. **9** and **10** illustrate the example first fastener **163** being disassembled (i.e., the first child support connector **159** being removed from the second child support connector **161**). In the illustrated example of FIGS. **1-5**, the second fastener **169** is substantially the same as the first fastener **163**. In the example of FIG. **9**, the first child support connector **159** is fully coupled with the second child support connector **161**. In

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this configuration, the lug **189** is fully inserted into the guide channel **195**, and the latch **191** is positioned in the receptacle **197**, as described above. To release the fastener **163**, the handle **193** is actuated (i.e., moved in the direction of the arrow shown in FIG. **6a**) to compress the spring **206**, which draws the latch **191** further into the interior of the grip **187** toward the release position. As the latch **191** is pulled further into the grip **187**, the latch **191** pulls out of the receptacle **197**. Consequently, the latch **191** no longer secures the lug **189** of the first child support connector **159** from sliding relative to the channel **195** of the second child support connector **161**. Thus, the first child support connector **159** may be slid upward relative to the second child support connector **161**, as shown in FIG. **10**. If the first child support connector **159** is moved sufficiently far, the first child support connector **159** can be separated from the second child support connector **161**.

To reassemble the fastener **163**, the lug **189** of the first child support connector **159** is slid into the guide channel **195**. As shown in FIG. **7**, the latch **191** includes a cam surface **200** which is positioned to engage a wall **196b** of the second child support connector **161** as the lug **189** is slid into the channel **195**. This engagement cams the latch **191** into the grip **187** (i.e., away from the over-locked position) such that the latch **191** does not interfere with insertion of the first child support connector **159** into the second child support connector **161**. Of course, the user may use the handle **193** to pull the latch **191** against the spring force and out of the latched position to facilitate the connection process, if desired.

Once the first child support connector **159** is fully inserted into the second child support connector **161**, the latch **191** will be located adjacent to the receptacle **197**. Therefore, the spring **206** forces the latch **191** into the receptacle **197** to fully secure the first child support connector **159** into the second child support connector **161**. As shown in FIG. **7**, the latch **191** includes a step or generally horizontal surface **202** to engage a counter-surface adjacent to the receptacle **197** to provide a firm engagement between the first and second child support connectors **159**, **161**. A portion of the cam surface **200** can serve as the surface to engage a wall adjacent to the receptacle **197** to hold the latch **191** against the spring force in the locked position between the over-locked position and the released position.

In the illustrated example, the grip **187** defines an indicator aperture **199** as shown in FIGS. **11** and **12**. An indicator **201** associated with the latch **191** is visible through the aperture **199**. In the illustrated example, the indicator **201** and aperture **199** are positioned such that when the latch **191** is in the locked position, the indicator **201** is at least partially exposed and visible in the aperture **199**. In contrast, when the latch **191** is in an unlocked position (i.e., not latched), the indicator **201** is not visible in the aperture **199**. Thus, the wearer, or other person, can easily determine if the latch **191** is in the locked position or the unlocked position by glancing at the grip **187** to see if the indicator **201** is visible through the aperture **199**. The indicator **201** may be brightly colored to enhance this visual recognition. This further safety feature allows the wearer to determine, at a glance, if the child support pouch **103** is secure and able to support a child.

As mentioned above, the spring **206** biases the latch **191** toward the over-locked position (FIG. **6b**). The latch **191** is in the over-locked position when the first child support connector **159** is not coupled to the second child support connector **161** and the user is not actuating the handle **193**. As shown in FIG. **6b**, in the over-locked position, the indicator **201** is not aligned with the aperture **199**. This provides the same visual indication to the user that the first and second child support

connectors **159**, **161** are not secured, as described above. In other words, the indicator **201** has a first position on a first side of the window **199** when the latch **191** is in the over-locked position, a second position adjacent to or within the window **199** when the latch **191** is in the locked position, and a third position on a second side of the window **199** opposite the first side when the latch **191** is in the released position.

To transition from the over-locked position to the locked position, the first child support clip **159** is inserted into the second child support clip **161** so that the latch **191** engages the receptacle **197**. As mentioned above, when the latch **191** is in the latched position, the spring **206** is partially compressed and the indicator **201** is aligned with the aperture **199** to indicate locked engagement between the first and second child support connectors **159**, **161**. To transition from the locked position to the unlocked position, the user actuates the handle **193** to traverse the slot **178** and the window **194**. Once the handle **193** reaches the end of the slot **178** (i.e., the end of the lost motion path) and is pulled further in the direction of the arrows shown in FIG. **6a**, the handle **193** engages the latch **191** and pulls the latch **191** along, out of the receptacle **197**, thus moving the indicator **201** out of alignment with the aperture **199**. The lost motion associated with moving the handle **193** from the locked position toward the released position is advantageous because it ensures accidental bumping of the handle **193** does not inadvertently move the latch **191** out of the locked position. Furthermore, the lost motion associated with the handle allows the user to insert the first child support clip **159** into the second child support clip **161** while the handle **193** is being restrained, i.e., if the user restrains movement of the handle **193** while grasping the first child support connector **159**, the fastener **163** may still be formed because the latch **191** may move relative to the handle **193** by virtue of the slot **178**.

In the example shown in FIGS. **11** and **12**, the second child support connector **161** includes a projection **203** on the interior of the guide channel **195**. The projection **203** interacts with a track **205** that is positioned along one side of the lug **189** of the first child support connector **159**. Only when the projection **203** and the track **205** on the lug **189** are aligned will the first and second child support connectors **159**, **161** be able to mate. In the illustrated example, the third and fourth child support connectors **165**, **167** also have a projection and track structure (not shown), but the projection and track of the third and fourth child support connectors **165**, **167** are preferably mirror images of the projection **203** and track **205** of the first and second child support connectors **159**, **161**. The projections **203** improve retention between the first and second child support connectors **159**, **161** and the third and fourth child support connectors **165**, **167**, respectively.

Furthermore, there is a height differential between the walls **196a** and **196b** (i.e., wall **196a** is taller than wall **196b**). The height differential of the walls **196a**, **b** requires a specific orientation of the child support connectors **159**, **161**, **165** and **167** before a secure connection can be made. As a result, the first child support connector **159** cannot mate with the fourth child support connector **167** and that the third child support connector **165** cannot mate with the second child support connector **161**. Thus, the wearer cannot inadvertently twist the front portion **135** of the child support pouch **103** during assembly.

The illustrated example first child support connector **159** further includes an ear **221** that is joined in a Y-configuration with the grip **187** and the lug **189**. The example ear **221** couples the first child support connector **159** to the child support pouch **103**. In the illustrated example shown in FIG. **11**, the ear **221** has a slot **223** through which a portion of the

first wing **151** of the front portion **135** of the pouch **103** is threaded to secure the first child support connector **159** to the pouch **103**. In an alternative example, the ear **221** may couple the first child support connector **159** to the harness **105** in a similar manner.

The illustrated example child carrier **101** also has a front vent **207**. The vent **207** of the illustrated example has an open position (illustrating the example open position shown in FIG. **13**). The vent **207** of the illustrated example also has a closed position (illustrating the example closed position shown in FIG. **14**). The vent **207** includes a mesh screen **209** and a cover **211**, which is at least partially removable to expose the mesh screen **209**. To remove the cover **211**, a closed fastener **213** is unfastened. In the illustrated example, a zipper is shown as the closed fastener **213**, but any mechanical fastener may be used. Once the closed fastener **213** is unfastened, the cover **211** may be folded or rolled up to expose the mesh screen **209**. The cover **211** may be secured in the folded or stored position by an open fastener **215**. In the illustrated example, the open fastener **215** is shown as a toggle and loop, but any mechanical fastener may be used.

In the illustrated example, the back portion **131** includes a back vent **217** (See FIG. **5**). The back vent **217** may also include a cover, though not specifically illustrated in FIG. **5**. When open, the vents **207**, **217** allow exterior air to reach the interior of the child support pouch **103**. When closed, the vents **207**, **217** help keep the child warm and dry.

Although certain example methods, apparatus and articles of manufacture have been described herein, the scope of coverage of this patent is not limited thereto. On the contrary, this patent covers all methods, apparatus and articles of manufacture fairly falling within the scope of the appended claims either literally or under the doctrine of equivalents.

What is claimed is:

**1.** A child carrier comprising:

a child support pouch to receive a child in a substantially upright position; and

a harness to support the child support pouch on an adult, the harness including:

first and second support straps;

first and second waist straps;

first and second support strap connector pairs, the first

support strap connector pair being located to releasably

connect the first support strap to the first waist strap

in a first orientation with the first support strap

across a shoulder of the adult and to releasably connect

the first support strap to the first waist strap in a

second orientation with the first support strap around

a waist of the adult, and the second support strap

connector pair being located to releasably connect the

second support strap to the second waist strap.

**2.** A child carrier as defined in claim **1** wherein the second support strap connector pair is located to releasably connect the second support strap to the second waist strap in a first orientation with the second support strap across a shoulder of the adult and to releasably connect the second support strap to the second waist strap in a second orientation with the second support strap around the waist of the adult.

**3.** A child carrier as defined in claim **1** wherein the first connector pair includes a first male connector and a first female connector and the second connector pair includes a second male connector and a second female connector, the first male connector being located on the first support strap, the first female connector being located on the first waist strap, the second female connector being located on the second support strap, the second male connector being located on the second waist strap.

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4. A child carrier as defined in claim 1 wherein the first support strap is pivotably coupled to the child support pouch.

5. A child carrier as defined in claim 3 wherein the second support strap is pivotably coupled to the child support pouch.

6. A child carrier as defined in claim 1 wherein the child support pouch is located adjacent a front of the adult when the first support strap is in the first orientation and the child support pouch is located adjacent a side of the adult when the first support strap is in the second orientation.

7. A child carrier as defined in claim 1 wherein at least one of the first support strap and the first waist strap is adjustable.

8. A child carrier as defined in claim 1 wherein the child support pouch further includes:

a back to be positioned between a child in the child support pouch and the adult;

a bottom;

a front; and

a headrest coupled to the front.

9. A child carrier as defined in claim 8 further including first and second headrest connector pairs to releasably connect the headrest to at least one of the back, the first support strap or the second support strap.

10. A child carrier as defined in claim 8 wherein the headrest is foldable between a support position and a storage position.

11. A child carrier as defined in claim 8 wherein the front includes a vent.

12. A child carrier as defined in claim 11 wherein the vent includes a mesh screen.

13. A child carrier as defined in claim 12 further including a cover which is at least partially removable to expose the mesh screen.

14. A child carrier as defined in claim 12 further including a cover fastener to secure the cover in a rolled or folded position to expose the mesh screen.

15. A child carrier as defined in claim 8 wherein the back includes a vent.

16. A child carrier as defined in claim 8 wherein the front defines first and second wings.

17. A child carrier as defined in claim 16 wherein the first and second wings cooperate with the headrest to define first and second arm openings.

18. A child carrier as defined in claim 16 further including:

a first child support connector associated with the first wing;

a second child support connector associated with the back of the child support pouch to mate with the first child support connector;

a third child support connector associated with the second wing; and

a fourth child support connector associated with the back of the child support pouch to mate with the third child support connector.

19. A child carrier as defined in claim 18 wherein the child support pouch defines first and second leg openings when the first child support connector is coupled with the second child support connector and the third child support connector is coupled with the fourth child support connector.

20. A child carrier as defined in claim 19 further including a first leg opening connector to reduce a size of the first leg opening.

21. A child carrier as defined in claim 18 wherein one of the first or the second child support connectors includes:

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a grip;

a lug extending from the grip to mate with the other of the first or the second child support connectors; and

a latch having a locked position and a released position.

22. A child carrier as defined in claim 21, wherein the latch also has an over-locked position.

23. A child carrier as defined in claim 21 wherein the other of the first or the second child support connectors includes a receptacle to mate with the latch when the latch is in the locked position to secure the first and second child support connectors in releasable engagement.

24. A child carrier as defined in claim 22 further including a spring biasing the latch toward the over-locked position.

25. A child carrier as defined in claim 22 further including a handle coupled to the latch to facilitate actuation of the latch between the over-locked position, the locked position and the released position.

26. A child carrier as defined in claim 22 further including an indicator associated with the latch to provide a visual indication when the latch is in at least one of the over-locked position, the locked position or the released position.

27. A child carrier as defined in claim 26 wherein the grip defines an aperture at least partially exposing the indicator when the indicator is in the at least one of the over-locked position, the locked position, or the released position.

28. A child carrier as defined in claim 21 further including a projection associated with the lug to ensure the one of the first or second child support connectors does not mate with the third or fourth child support connectors.

29. A child carrier as defined in claim 8 wherein the bottom is adjustable to adjust a size of the child support pouch.

30. A child carrier as defined in claim 1 further including:

a fastener to secure the child support pouch to the harness, the fastener including:

a male connector including a lug; and

a female connector including a guide channel to receive the lug;

a first one of the male connector and the female connector including a spring and a latch, the latch being movable between a latched position, a released position, and an over-locked position, the spring biasing the latch toward the over-locked position; and

a second one of the male connector and the female connector including a receptacle to receive the latch to secure the male connector to the female connector when the lug is in the guide channel and the latch is in the latched position within the receptacle, the latch to enter the over-locked position under the influence of the spring when the latch is not in the receptacle and the latch to be prevented from entering the over-locked position when the latch is in the receptacle.

31. A child carrier as defined in claim 30, further including a handle to operatively engage the latch to move the latch from the latched position to the released position, wherein the handle is positioned to traverse a lost motion path before operatively engaging the latch to move the latch from the latched position to the released position.

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